

# FAIRBANKS METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

City of Fairbanks, Council Chambers  
800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

### Meeting Minutes January 6, 2010

#### 1. Call to Order

Ms. Gardino called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

#### 2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

- \* FMATS Policy Committee members
- \*\* FMATS Staff members
- \*\*\* FMATS Technical Committee members

NAME	REPRESENTING
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
*** Michael Wenstrup	FNSB Planning Commission
*** Cameron Wolford for	Jonathan Shambare ( <b>absent</b> ) UAF
*** Jerry Woods	Tanana Chiefs Conference
*** Michael Meeks ( <b>absent</b> )	Ft. Wainwright
*** Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF
*** Bill Butler	City of North Pole
*** Bruce Carr	ARRC
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC
*** Bernardo Hernandez	FNSB
*** Mike Schmetzer	City of Fairbanks
*** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
*** Glenn Miller	FNSB
** Todd Boyce	FNSB
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF
** Tara Callear	FMATS Planner
Peter Stern	Resident, Aurora Drive
Clark Milne	DOT& PF

#### 3. Public Comment

Mr. Peter Stern expressed concern about sidewalks on Aurora Drive. He walks year-round and it is an issue in the City of Fairbanks and he hopes that they will follow DOT's lead and improve winter maintenance on sidewalks and bike paths.

Michael Wenstrup joined the meeting 12:05

#### 4. Approval of the January 6, 2010 Agenda

- **MOTION:** To approve the January 6, 2010 agenda. (Carr/Hardesty). None opposed. Approved.

COMMENTS: NONE

## 5. Approval of the December 2, 2009 Minutes

- **MOTION:** To approve the December 2, 2009 minutes. (Carr/Wenstrup) None opposed. Approved.

COMMENTS: NONE

## 6. Committee Reports

### a. Seasonal Mobility Task Force

Ms. Callear gave a brief presentation of the report, per Mr. Bernardo Hernandez's request. She explained that the report outlines the results of researching the extent of responsibility assumed by each agency, which was later summarized in the map. The map was developed for agencies to use in strategizing coordinated maintenance efficiencies and improvements. Coordination of priorities and responsibilities are noted specifically in the report as areas that this map would serve to improve. Such improvements would help to set user expectations and increase user confidence. On the map, pedestrian traffic generators are indicated to direct prioritization of maintenance efforts away from road classification and toward a system based on pedestrian access needs such as public buildings, transit, retail, employment centers, etc.

Ms. Callear summarized the recommendations in the report, which includes guidance for implementation. She explained that the recommendations address year-round pedestrian and bicycle mobility challenges. Some of the issues addressed in the recommendations are gaps in available facilities, maintenance ordinances, transit access, ADA concerns, safety, public awareness, and interagency communication.

Mr. Mike Schmetzer made the point that a network would be a benefit. Ms. Callear added that the ideal approach to maintenance and construction prioritization would be based on an agreed upon network that would connect key pedestrian traffic generators. This network of existing and needed facilities ties into the recommendation for the development of a bike and pedestrian plan.

Ms. Callear explained that the identification of a network is one angle to be considered in the revision of the City of Fairbanks ordinance. It would be this network that could be an exception to the existing ordinance that states that maintenance responsibilities are that of the adjacent property owner. It was mentioned that a downtown maintenance district, with higher standards and business owner involvement, may be a solution. This may be a longer term goal, based on current budgetary constraints.

Mr. Cameron Wolford suggested that the University's maintenance efforts and the need for connectivity be integrated into this effort. Ms. Callear agreed that this is important, and that it should be addressed as the Task Force's work continues.

Ms. Callear pointed out the recommended winter maintenance guidelines in the report as well as the potential for integrating some level of required performance standards into the written maintenance agreements signed before construction. These types of agreed upon standards ensure consistency in the quality of service to be expected across the network.

Mr. Hernandez asked about enforcement and progress monitoring. He said that it would be beneficial to develop an annual report on how things are going. He said that he would hate to see the effort put into this report dissolve without noticed improvement. Ms. Callear responded saying that the public will be one measure of improvement. By setting expectations for the level of service to be expected, the public will speak up if those expectations are not being met. This

will require each agency publicizing their guidelines and priorities, once coordinated. She also noted that this report does not conclude the work to be done by this Task Force.

Ms. Gardino mentioned that DOT is currently developing a website that will lend itself nicely to a collaborative public outreach effort. Mr. Clark Milne said that this maintenance website would help to better inform people of the responsible agencies, the priorities, the performance standards etc.

Mr. Hernandez also pointed out that North Pole ought to be included. Ms. Callear replied that North Pole facility maintenance is all the responsibility of DOT. And as far as ped/bike planning, it is mentioned in the report that North Pole connectivity with the network will be addressed.

Mr. Bob Pristash asked about the ADA requirements for winter maintenance. Ms. Callear said that the regulations are vague. She said that it is referred to as providing "reasonable access/time". There are no specific time frames specified. It often requires an ADA complaint be made in order for the discussion to occur as to whether or not the access and timing was in fact "reasonable". It is the hope of the Task Force that this report will raise a similar red flag in terms of the risk of liability.

Mr. Milne mentioned bike path winter maintenance, stating that it is the preference of some that bike paths remain snow covered in the winter for other recreational purposes. Ms. Callear said that this use is mentioned in the report and it states that such a network should be established to accommodate this user group. Some bike paths are considered part of the pedestrian network currently and should remain so as these networks are established.

Mr. Hernandez asked about implementation and results. Ms. Callear said that it is the intent that this report will generate discussion and further strategic planning. It is intended to point out angles for implementation. She said that she will be facilitating this process with the various agencies and enabling the initial levels of coordination. Based on concerns of resistance to implementation, Ms. Callear clarified that this is not a call to action. They are recommended strategies for improvement, and not a step by step process.

The motion to recommend to the Policy Committee to adopt a resolution of support for the report was postponed until the next meeting. The resolution will be revised to make it more compelling based on the Technical Committee's recommendation.

**b. PM 2.5 Subcommittee- Agreement Status**

Ms. Gardino said that DOT drafted the agreement and that she added FMATS comments. The marked up draft is currently being reviewed by DOT, Northern Region. The other agencies will be involved in the drafting process next.

**7. Old Business**

**a. 2010-2013 TIP Amendment No.1—Comments to date**

Ms. Gardino referenced the comments received to date, included in the packet. All comments will be posted to the website at the end of the comment period. The comment period ends January 28, 2010.

**b. Bus Shelters Update**

Mr. Ethan Birkholz said that the language of the agreement has been written based on a sample agreement from Anchorage and based on the original draft.

Mr. Hernandez expressed funding concerns of losing the money. Mr. Glenn Miller stated that this money could raise red flags because it has not been used and it has been sitting and collecting dust. It is important that it does not get delayed further.

**c. UAF Tanana Loop – Alumni Drive Roundabout Scoring**

Mr. Cameron Wolford added an information sheet to the packet based on the questions raised at the previous Technical Committee meeting. He said that the University would be responsible for preliminary design. The project estimates were based on similar projects. He said that once the preliminary design is completed, there will be a better cost estimate available. This project will be part of the Master Plan revision which will address access issues.

Mr. Wolford noted that it was the recommendation of Mayor Hopkins that UAF pursue getting this project into the TIP so that UAF can leverage other funding. Mr. Schmetzer asked why UAF would not want to pursue funding directly and leave it out of FMATS. Mr. Wolford said that the advice to go the route of the TIP was to give it legs to stand on. The University's capital project list covers Southeast, Anchorage and Fairbanks. He said that getting a road facility on this list would take 10 years, at least.

Mr. Michael Wenstrup clarified saying it is not necessarily an attempt to get FMATS funding, so much as it is to get an earmark. Mr. Wolford agreed. Mr. Birkholz said that by doing the preliminary design, they are locked into getting a State earmark. Mr. Wolford agreed, saying that it was the intent to pursue a State earmark.

Mr. Wolford emphasized the traffic counts and that the intersection is currently dysfunctional. He said it is a gateway to the University, but it is also used heavily by through-traffic. He said the previous traffic realignment occurred in 2000. This only partly addressed the problem.

Mr. Hernandez asked about accidents. Mr. Wolford said it is low, which is possibly due to the low speed limits and the adequate sight distance. He said that the issue is the fact that it is five legs with singular movement. Mr. Hernandez also asked about pedestrian facilities. Mr. Wolford said it is frequented by pedestrians and pedestrian movement will be addressed as part of the design.

Mr. Bill Butler asked that if it is attracting through-traffic in its current dysfunctional state, isn't it likely that improvements will attract more traffic. Mr. Wolford said it is possible and that they do want to encourage the public to come on campus. The suggestion was made of establishing a load limit on the road to limit the types of traffic using the short cut.

Ms. Gardino said that once scored, it could be entered into the TIP as part of the next amendment as the need to do one arises. Mr. Birkholz suggested that the project be scored and submitted independently via email.

**8. New Business**

**a. Plack Road Scope Change**

Ms Gardino explained that the current scope limits the design to just look at a separated path. By revising the scope, it would allow for flexibility in looking at alternatives.

Mr. Birkholz said that the issue is that a separated path would require a huge ROW acquisition, which would be time consuming and costly. This would give them options to look at faster, more cost effective alternatives. A separated path would be one of the alternatives examined.

- **MOTION:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to revise the scope of the Plack Road Bike/Pedestrian Facility project to construct a bicycle and pedestrian facility along Plack Road from Badger Road to Nelson Road. (Birkholz/Carr) None opposed. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**  
NONE

**b. FMATS Sign Replacement Project**

Ms. Gardino explained the need for the revised scope. Removing the assessment portion of the project allows federal funds to be spent on sign replacement alone. Mr. Pristash explained that the decision was made based on comments in the Design Study Report.

Mr. Butler said that the issues that were raised by Mayor Isaacson at the Policy Committee meeting have been addressed.

- **MOTION:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to revise the scope of the FMATS Sign Replacement project to replace signs in accordance with the City of Fairbanks' and the City of North Pole's established sign management plan. (Carr/Woods) None opposed. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**  
NONE

**c. Van Horn Road Rehabilitation PH 4 Increase**

The motion was postponed until the next meeting. Due to the highly irregular nature of the request, the Committee is requesting that a representative from DOT present a justification for the increase because the project was thought to be complete. During the project closeout, it was discovered that the unclassified (waste) excavation quantity is more than what was in the plan. It seems the intent to file a claim exceeds the 90 day limitation.

**d. 2010 – 2013 STIP Amendment No. 1 and Stimulus II Update**

Ms. Gardino explained that the purpose of the Amendment was to incorporate a list of potential stimulus funding projects. The Amendment and FMATS comments were included in the packet. Also in the packet is the letter submitted to the Congressional delegation by FMATS in response to the fact that the language in the draft Stimulus II bill would once again single out the FMATS as the only MPO to not receive funding.

Ms. Gardino asked AMPO for a letter of support in the effort to get this issue addressed, but has not heard a response. Mr. Carr encouraged continuing to pursue this. Mr. Hernandez asked if there has been any response to the letter. Ms. Gardino said she heard from Sen. Begich's office and they said they would forward it to D.C. Mayor Hopkins is also writing a letter that will be signed by the three local mayors.

- **MOTION:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to submit comments on the Draft STIP Amendment as presented. (Carr/Schmetzer4) None opposed. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**  
NONE

**e. FY 2011 Legislative Request for State Funding**

Ms. Gardino referenced the list of projects, as submitted for the Governor's budget, and passed on the request from the Policy Committee for the Technical Committee to make recommendations as to which of these projects would be entered into the database. Projects were changed, deleted and rearranged (see motions) and passed on to the Policy Committee to make a final determination as to which to submit.

- **MOTION:** To remove the Fairbanks Curb Corner Upgrades, South Cushman - Mitchell to Sanduri and Wendell Street Bridge projects from the FY2011 legislative request list. (Schmetzer/Woods) None opposed. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**

Fairbanks Curb Corner Upgrades are funded. The South Cushman-Mitchell to Sanduri can easily fit into the program. The Wendell Street Bridge was removed because it is not in great need of replacement and also because it is eligible for other funds.

- **MOTION:** To move the Fairbanks to North Pole Rail Realignment Phase I and Yankovich-Miller Hill Road Multi-use Path directly below the continued funding for the FMATS Office Project. Amended to list the South Cushman - 15th to Mitchell Expressway project below the Yankovich project. (Woods/Carr). Ten approved. One opposed (Hernandez).  
Approved.

**COMMENTS:**

The order of the list was revised to simplify the process of elimination/prioritization by the Policy Committee.

**f. Resolution of Support for the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force Recommendations**

Mr. Miller briefed the Committee on the Task Force's recent activities, including the meeting held in Fairbanks to finalize the document. The goal of the Task Force was to coordinate existing transportation services with a focus on providing services for those with special needs. The recommendations state that there should be a needs assessment done to strategize improvements. Another major recommendation is for the State to provide funding for such services. About 20% of human service transportation funding nationally is provided by the State. Alaska is one of three states nationally that does not provide such transportation funding.

Mr. Miller reported that an administrative order extended the work of the Task Force until April 2010. The report will likely be submitted in February.

- **MOTION:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to adopt the resolution of support for the recommendations of the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force.  
(Carr/Birkholz) None opposed. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**

NONE

**9. Public Comment Period**

NONE

**10. Other Issues**

**11. Informational Items**

**a. Policy Committee Action Items from December 16, 2009**

Ms. Gardino referenced the Policy Committee action items included in the packet for information purposes only.

**b. Jobs for Main Street Act of 2010**

This topic was addressed as part of an earlier item.

**c. Railroad**

The Surface Transportation Board approved the environmental document for the Northern Rail Extension, which extends the AKRR from Eielson AFB to Delta Junction.

Also the Governor has created by administrative order the AMFAST Committee of senior military and community officials responsible for advising the Governor on ways to keep the military presence in Alaska. There is an undercurrent of concern that the State of Alaska does not support our military from an infrastructure standpoint. A report will cover ports, roads, railroads and other items of infrastructure.

## 12. Adjourn

- **Motion to adjourn.** (Butler/Schmetzer) None opposed. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 1:25 pm.

The next scheduled Technical Committee Meeting is February 3, 2010, at Noon at City Hall, in the City Council Chambers.

Approved:



Donna Gardino, Chair  
FMATS Technical Committee

Date:

2/3/10